

Stories 3.0: Misrepresenting God

Today's Story: Tiffany Good-Perez

Moses was **mistreated** by the people.

 Numbers 20:1–5 (NIV) “In the first month the whole Israelite community arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried. ² Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. ³ They quarreled with Moses and said, “If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the Lord! ⁴ Why did you bring the Lord’s community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here? ⁵ Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!”

 Numbers 20:6–9 (NIV) “Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell facedown, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them. ⁷ The Lord said to Moses, ⁸ “Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink.” ⁹ So Moses took the staff from the Lord’s presence, just as He commanded him.”

Moses had **misrepresented God** to the people.

 Numbers 20:10–12 (NIV) “He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, “Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?” ¹¹ Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. ¹² But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.”

 Numbers 20:8 (NIV) “Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink.”

 Deuteronomy 3:23–28 (NLT) “...I pleaded with the Lord and said, ²⁴ ‘O Sovereign Lord, you have only begun to show your greatness and the strength of your hand to me, your servant. Is there any god in heaven or on earth who can perform such great and mighty deeds as you do? ²⁵ Please let me cross the Jordan to see the wonderful land on the other side, the beautiful hill country and the Lebanon mountains.’ ²⁶ “But the Lord was angry with me because of you, and He would not listen to me. ‘That’s enough!’ He declared. ‘Speak of it no more. ²⁷ But go up to Pisgah Peak, and look over the land in every direction. Take a good look, but you may not cross the Jordan River. ²⁸ Instead, commission Joshua and encourage and

strengthen him, for he will lead the people across the Jordan. He will give them all the land you now see before you as their possession.”

 Matthew 17:1–3 (NIV) “After six days Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² There He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. ³ Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.”

Digging Deeper: Why do you think hurting people hurt people? What can we learn from Moses? What could Moses have done differently? What could you have done differently? Why do we minimize/excuse the misrepresenting of God’s character? Are you living in a way that is a caricature of God’s character, or are you careful to represent God accurately?